

February
2020 / 5780

Congregation Knesseth Israel

~ an Inclusive Community ~

229 Mountain Avenue
Bound Brook, NJ

info@ckibbnj.org
732-469-0934

SERVICES

Every Friday at 8 pm

Friday, Feb 28, 6:30 pm

Shabbat Across America
Dinner & Service

Saturday, Feb. 22, 9:30 am

Shabbat Morning Service
Torah Study & Lunch

ACTIVITIES/EVENTS

CKI Family Game Night

Saturday, Feb. 1, 6:00 pm

CKI "Vintage" Sale

Sunday, Feb 16,
8am—2pm

Adult Education Program

Saturday, Feb 29

The Afterlife -

*What Awaits Me in the
World of Eternity?*

7:15 pm Havdalah

7:30 pm Program

MEETINGS

Tuesday, Feb 4

Exec. Board Mtg 7:30 pm

Sunday, Feb 9

Board Mtg 9:30 am

Men's Club Mtg 11 am

Education Comm. 11 am

Tuesday, Feb 25

Chesed Committee 7 pm

Ritual Committee 7:30 pm

VISIT US ONLINE AT:

www.ckibbnj.org
and

[www.facebook.com /
CKI.BoundBrook](https://www.facebook.com/CKI.BoundBrook)

From Rabbi Wylen

TWO DONKEYS

There are only two talking animal stories in the Bible.

The first is the snake in the Garden of Eden.

The second, perhaps less well known, is Balaam's donkey.

The wicked prophet Balaam is on his way to curse the Israelites, as he was hired to do by King Balak of Moab. Balaam sets out, riding on his donkey.

An angel of God comes to block the path. The donkey sees the angel and stops in her tracks.

Balaam does not see the angel. He beats his donkey furiously, trying to make her move forward. Finally, the donkey opens her mouth and says to Balaam, "Why are you beating me? Have I not always been a faithful donkey to you?" Then Balaam sees the angel blocking the road.

Our Sages debated whether the donkey had a mind to speak, or whether the words were placed in the donkey's mouth by God. Interesting speculation. A Mishnah in Pirke Avot suggests that the mouth of Balaam's donkey was created by God on the sixth day of Creation, just before sundown. In other words, it's a one-shot deal. Don't expect your own donkey to chat with you.

It seems peculiar that the one person to get a talking donkey is the wicked prophet Balaam.

To counterbalance this anomaly, Jewish folklore tells of another smart donkey, a Jewish donkey.

Rabbi Pinhas ben Yair had a donkey so pious, she would only eat fodder that had been properly tithed. How did she know? She knew. Most farmers were probably not particular about tithing hay, so the donkey had to be particular.

Rabbi Pinhas ben Yair never told his donkey where to go. Whenever he sat on her back, she walked directly to a location where a great Torah discussion was happening, a congregation of Sages. How did she know? She just knew.

Wouldn't it be nice to have a donkey like the donkey of Rabbi Pinhas ben Yair?

Rabbi Stephen Wylen

Rabbi Wylen's Office Hours at CKI

Tuesdays: 2:00 — 4:00 pm

Sundays: 12:30 — 2:30 pm

or by appointment



Please call, text, or email ahead of time to confirm Rabbi Wylen's availability or to schedule an appointment: smwylen@gmail.com 973-768-3942

President's Message

Now that we are in the middle of winter in New Jersey, it is time to celebrate the New Year for Trees. Not exactly a holy day, but the day in the life cycle of trees in Israel that commemorates the first day of the next year in their life. The 15th of Shevat is considered the point in time that the ground becomes saturated with the rains of the new year which cause the sap to start rising in the trees, enabling the fruit of the tree to begin budding. A man plants a seed in the ground and waits for the day that it sprouts from the earth. Before it can do this, it must shed its outer protective coating and become vulnerable and yield to the influence of the earth and its nutrients. When it matures and bears fruit, it will provide for many people and future generations -- just as you can decide to make personal changes to better yourself and the members of your inner circle of friends and family, who in turn will also spread the fruits of their labor to many others. Below is an excerpt from an article I read the other day that has caused me to look within myself.

"Traditionally, Tu B'Shevat was not a Jewish festival. Rather, it marked an important date for Jewish farmers in ancient times. The Torah states, 'When you enter the land [of Israel] and plant any tree for food, you shall regard its fruit as forbidden. Three years it shall be forbidden for you, not to be eaten' (Leviticus 19:23). The fruit of the fourth year was to be offered to the priests in the Temple as a gift of gratitude for the bounty of the land, and the fifth-year fruit--and all subsequent fruit--was finally for the farmer. This law, however, raised the question of how farmers were to mark the 'birthday' of a tree. The Rabbis therefore established the 15th of the month of Shevat as a general birthday for all trees, regardless of when they were actually planted.

"Fruit trees were awarded special status in the Torah because of their importance in sustaining life and as a symbol of God's divine favor. Even during times of war, God warns the Israelites, 'When in your war against a city and you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees... Only trees that you know do not yield food may be destroyed' (Deuteronomy 20:19-20).

"At a later time, the Rabbis of the Talmud established four 'new years' throughout the Jewish calendar--Rosh Hashanah, or the Jewish new year for the calendar date; a new year for establishing the reign of kings; a new year for tithing animals of Jewish farmers to be given to the Temple; and finally, Tu B' Shevat, the new year for the trees. The Rabbis discussed why this date was chosen; saying that Tu B'Shevat falls after mid-winter (usually in February), they concluded that the majority of the annual rainfall has usually already fallen by this time in the land of Israel, thus yielding a healthy, water-logged soil in which to plant new trees.

"In medieval times, kabbalists (Jewish mystics) gave Tu B'Shevat greater spiritual significance. Seeing in Tu B'Shevat a vehicle for mystical ideas, the kabbalists imbued Tu B'Shevat with new religious significance as well as created elaborate new symbolic rituals. According to Lurianic Kabbalah (which is a form of mysticism studied by the students of Isaac Luria), all physical forms--including human beings--hide within them a spark of the Divine Presence. This is similar to some kinds of fruits or nuts, which hide within them seeds of new life and potential growth. In Jewish mysticism, human actions can release these sparks and help increase God's presence in the world. On Tu B'Shevat, the kabbalists would eat certain fruits associated with the land of Israel as a symbolic way of releasing these divine sparks.

"In modern times, Tu B'Shevat has become a symbol of both Zionist attachment to the land of Israel as well as an example of Jewish sensitivity to the environment. Early Zionist settlers to Israel began planting new trees not only to restore the ecology of ancient Israel, but as a symbol of renewed growth of the Jewish people returning to their ancestral homeland."

Take some time this month and rekindle the spark that is inside of you!

Michael Garber CKI President

Religious School

There are only three short months left of Religious School this year. Please remember to send me an e-mail or call to let me know when your child will be absent from school. I hope all of you are staying healthy with the unusual weather we are having. Remember, before we know it the warm weather will be here again.

Upcoming Religious School celebrations include Purim in March and Pesach in April. Congregants are always welcome to join us at our Religious School events. We are planning to have another Purim carnival this year. The plan is to open it up to the public to try to increase our CKI family. If you would like to help, please contact Robin Garber at School@ckibbnj.org.

Just a reminder, the Rummage Sale is coming up in May and there are always things that your children can do to help with set up. Please, let us show our children that volunteering our time is a good thing to do.

As always, please see me if you have any questions or concerns,

Robin Garber
Education Committee Chair



2020 Religious School Schedule

February	2, 9, 23	<i>no school on 2/16 - Presidents' Day weekend</i>
March	1, 8 (Purim Carnival), 15, 22, 29	
April	5 (Passover celebration), 19, 26	<i>no school on 4/12 - Passover</i>
May 3	<i>Last Day of School</i>	

Game Night at CKI

Saturday, February 1st at 6:00 pm

**Board Games, Card Games, Role Playing games, and more
to challenge your wits and skills!**

A Gift Basket Raffle including items for families and kids!

**Kosher dinner prepared at CKI: Baked Ziti, Pizza, and Salad
Plus snacks, beverages, and desserts**

**ADMISSION: CKI Members - \$6.00 Guests - \$7.00
CKI Religious School Students - \$5.00**

VINTAGE SALE AT CKI

Sunday, February 16
8:00 am - 2:00 pm

Bring a friend and shop our
special one day sale at CKI, featuring:

Costume and Fine Jewelry

Framed Fine Art

Baseball Cards, Dishes

Lenox ware, Collectibles

Picture Frames

Records (33's, 45's, 78's)

CDs, DVDs, Video Games

Books



We are accepting donations for the sale starting February 1st

Shabbat Morning Worship, Torah Study, & Luncheon

Saturday, February 22, 9:30 am

Torah Study starts around 11:30 am

Please come and help us make a *minyan* for the service and Torah reading! After services, Rabbi Wylen will lead a Torah study and we will enjoy a light luncheon.

You are welcome to come for the service, the Torah study, or both. Guests are very welcome!



CKI Adult Education

Saturday, February 29th

Havdalah 7:15 pm; Program 7:30 pm



The Afterlife - What Awaits me in the World of Eternity?

Free for CKI members; there is a \$5 fee for guests.

Join us for
Shabbat.



Friday, February 28, 2020 *Shabbat Across America*

**Dinner at CKI — 6:30 pm
followed by CKI's Shabbat Service**

**Turn an ordinary Friday night into
something extraordinary!**

*CKI will be one of hundreds of synagogues across North America participating in a national Jewish event to celebrate something that unites all Jews — **Shabbat!***

Bring your friends, family, and neighbors!

Dinner prices: \$8 for adults, \$5 for children under 13.

RSVP for dinner by February 24 to SAA@ckibbnj.org.

We will serve a kosher chicken dinner with traditional side dishes.

Please arrive at 6:15 pm so everyone is seated in time for dinner.

At 8:00 pm, Rabbi Wylen and Cantor Roffman will lead us in Shabbat worship.

The service is open to all.

***Shabbat Across America** is an educational event of the National Jewish Outreach Program. It provides Jews of all affiliations (and those not affiliated with any synagogue) the opportunity to experience Shabbat as a community.*

SEND YOUR FRIENDS SHALACH MANOT FOR PURIM!



In March we will be celebrating the joyous holiday of Purim. One of the fun traditions of Purim is sending gifts of food to your friends and family.

CKI's Shalach Manot fundraiser makes it easy for you to send Purim gifts and greetings to your friends at CKI. Every CKI household will receive a Shalach Manot box containing tasty treats—including hamantaschen baked at CKI—along with a letter listing the congregants wishing their family a “*Chag Purim Sameach* - Happy Purim!”

To add your name to the letters, please fill out the Shalach Manot order form which is being mailed out in early February, and return it to CKI as soon as possible.

We look forward to your participation in this CKI tradition, which brings great closeness within our community! The funds raised also help support our temple's operations.



**Pick up your Shalach Manot boxes at
Shabbat services on March 6, at the Purim Carnival March 8,
or at the Purim Service/Megillah reading Monday, March 9.**

PAGES FOR THE AGES

**Dedicate a CKI Prayerbook to
commemorate a special anniversary,
birthday, graduation, simcha, or to honor
the memory of a friend or relative.**



Your dedication will appear on the inside front cover.

Bookplates cost \$18 each. Purchase 7 bookplates and get 3 more for free!

Forms are available at the Temple office,
or call 732-469-0934

GIFTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

All donations, regardless of size, help our congregation and are greatly appreciated.

We sincerely Thank You!

In Memory of a Loved One's Yahrzeit

Oneg Shabbat and Kiddush sponsors

The Adult Education & Membership Committees

Roz S. made a donation in honor of her husband's birthday

David S. donated return-addressed envelopes for use in CKI mailings.

Contributions can be made to various CKI funds, including:

Pages for the Ages

Dedicated bookplates placed in our prayer books

Bereavement Meal Fund

Hardship Fund

Tree of Life Leaves

CBT Tree of Life Plaques

Michael Barr Memorial Library

Memorial Board Plaques

Memorial Fund

Temple Fund

General use for temple needs

For information about making contributions, please contact the CKI office at 732-469-0934

NEW — DONATE TO CKI ONLINE !

You can now donate to CKI online using Paypal or your credit/debit card.

Visit the "Giving" page of our website:

www.ckibbnj.org



Please let your friends and relatives know that they can use this method to make donations to CKI.



Leagrams



*Do you need to send cards for
birthdays, weddings,
anniversaries, get-wells, etc.?
No need to go to the card store
and the post office –
Let Sisterhood send a card for you!
For \$5.00, send a Leagram
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help support the CKI Sisterhood.*

Contact Lori Siegel at

leagrams@ckibbnj.org



**Tell your friends about
CKI's special rates for
First Year Members:**

\$360 for families,

\$180 for individuals!



***In 2020, Cantor Eddie Roffman will
join us at the following services:***

Friday, February 28
Shabbat Across America

Monday, March 9, 7 pm
Purim service / Megillah reading

Friday, April 3
Instrumental Music Shabbat

Friday, May 29
Shabbat service

Friday, June 19
Membership
Appreciation Shabbat &
Ice Cream Oneg



**Earn money for CKI
when you shop online!**



Start at **smile.amazon.com**
every time you shop at Amazon.
Once you designate Congregation
Knesseth Israel as your charity, the
AmazonSmile Foundation will
donate 0.5% of the price of your
purchases to our synagogue.

Your Amazon shopping cart, Wish
Lists, and other account settings
will carry over to AmazonSmile.

CKI GIFT CARD PROGRAM



The gift card table will be open on Sundays during Religious School.

WE CARRY GIFT CARDS FOR ALL OCCASIONS, including:

Supermarkets: Shop Rite, Acme, Kings, Trader Joes, Whole Foods, Wegmans, Stop n Shop

Restaurants: McDonalds, Burger King, Dunkin Donuts, Starbucks, Olive Garden & more

Drugstores & Convenience Stores: Walgreens, CVS, Quick Chek, Wawa

Department Stores: Kohls, Macys, Target, Walmart

Online shopping: iTunes, Amazon.com

Plus: Costco, Bed Bath & Beyond, Staples, Home Depot, Petsmart, Barnes & Noble, Gas stations, and more!

We can get cards for many other stores — please let us know what you need!



Sponsor an Oneg Shabbat !



Celebrate your special Shabbat with your friends at CKI.

Sponsor an Oneg Shabbat to celebrate occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, graduation, retirement, or honor the memory of a relative or friend.

Sponsors' names and dedications are listed in the CKI upcoming events and announced during services.

To schedule a date, please contact the Oneg Coordinator, Robin Garber, at CKIoneg@gmail.com

Dates will be scheduled up to six months in advance.

February Yahrzeits

ADDING YOUR LOVED ONE'S NAME TO THE YAHRZEIT LIST:

CKI Members can add names to our Yahrzeit list by contacting the temple office with:

- Your loved one's name
- Their relation to you
- The date and year of their passing
- Whether you prefer to observe the Yahrzeit on the Hebrew date or English date each year.

Names are read at the Shabbat service on the Friday before the observances.

CKI sends a reminder letter for each Yahrzeit one to two weeks prior to the service.



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*If you would like to place a business advertisement in our newsletter,
please contact the CKI office for details at: 732-469-0934 or ads@ckibbnj.org*

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ERICA J. MANDELL
ATTORNEY AT LAW

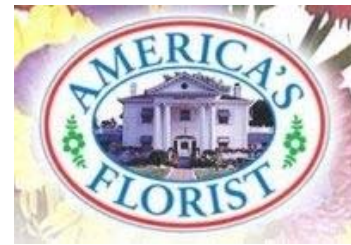
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CKI Officers 2019—20

President: Michael Garber
President@ckibbnj.org
Vice President: Marla Lecin
Fundraising@ckibbnj.org
Vice President: Robin Garber
School@ckibbnj.org
Vice President: Matthew Lecin
Ritual@ckibbnj.org
Vice President: Lori Siegel
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Recording Secretary: Tim Rutka
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Corresponding Secretary: Pam Barr
CorrSec@ckibbnj.org

Men's Club President: Matt Lecin
Sisterhood President: Pam Barr

CKI Committee Chairs 2019—20

Adult Education: Nancy Berkenfeld
AdultEd@ckibbnj.org
Chesed: Abby Rutka Chesed@ckibbnj.org
Education: Robin Garber School@ckibbnj.org
Event Planning: Pam Barr & Robin Garber
Finance: Abby Rutka Finance@ckibbnj.org
Fundraising: Marla Lecin Fundraising@...
House/Aesthetics: Michael Garber & Pam Barr
House@ckibbnj.org
Jr. Congregation: Abby Rutka JCC@...
Membership: Lori Siegel Membership@...
Personnel: Michael Garber Personnel@....
Publicity: Marla Lecin PR@ckibbnj.org
Ritual: Matthew Lecin Ritual@ckibbnj.org

*We encourage you to join our committees !
Please contact the current committee chair, or
CKI President Michael Garber*

Cemetery plots available

CKI has plots for sale in our section of the Washington Cemetery, located at 104 Deans Rhode Hall Road, North Brunswick.

For information, please contact Rich Biely at rbiely@rcn.com or 848-391-9352



When a Death in Your Family Occurs, Please Let Us Know...

When there is a death in your immediate family, we at CKI would like to acknowledge your loss and support you in all ways possible.

Please promptly notify Rabbi Wylen (973-768-3942; Rabbi@ckibbnj.org) and/or the CKI office. We can send out an email notice, including the time and place of the funeral and shiva, so that CKI congregants can help make a minyan for the services.

Even if the funeral and/or shiva is going to be held out of town, please let us know so that we can offer our condolences and add your loved one to the Yahrzeit list.